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Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUEBEC 00254 220106Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 PA-02 ICA-20 /059 W
----------023929 220110Z /64
P 211430Z JUL 78
FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1410
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL MONTREAL

UNCLAS QUEBEC 0254

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, CA
SUBJECT: INCREASE IN QUEBEC MINIMUM WAGE

1. PRIME MINISTER LEVESQUE ANNOUNCED YESTERDAY (JULY 20) THAT QUEBEC'S MINIMUM WAGE, CURRENTLY THE HIGHEST IN NORTH AMERICA AT DOLS 3.27/HOUR, WILL BE INCREASED TO DOLS 3.37 ON OCTOBER 1 AND TO DOLS 3.47 ON APRIL 1, 1979. HOTEL AND RESTAURANT WORKERS, WHOSE WAGE NOW STANDS AT DOLS 2.65/HOUR, WILL SEE THEIR MINIMUM WAGE JUMP BY FIVE CENTS OCTOBER 1 AND A FURTHER FIVE CENTS APRIL 1, 1979. THE MINIMUM WAGE FOR EMPLOYEES UNDER 18 WILL REMAIN AT THE CURRENT LEVEL OF DOLS 3.07.

2. IN 1977 THE GOQ COMMITTED ITSELF TO INDEXING THE MINIMUM WAGE TO THE COST OF LIVING. INCREASES WERE DULY ANNOUNCED IN JULY 1977 AND JANUARY 1978. WHEN NO INCREASE WAS ANNOUNCED AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS MONTH, THERE WAS SPECULATION THAT THE GOVERNMENT PLANNED TO FREEZE THE MINIMUM WAGE LEVEL. THE INCREASE ANNOUNCED YESTERDAY WAS A COMPROMISE, LEVESQUE ACKNOWLEDGED "THAT WILL PROBABLY SATISFY NOBODY ENTIRELY." THE INCREASE ANNOUNCED FOR APRIL 1 NEXT YEAR REPRESENTS A HIKE OVER 15 MONTS OF 6.1 PERCENT, OR ONLY ABOUT HALF OF THE PREDICTED INCREASE IN THE COST OF LIVING. LEVESQUE SAID THE SMALLER INCREASE WAS DICTATED BY THE NEED TO REDUCE THE MINIMUM
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WAGE GAP BETWEEN QUEBEC AND ITS NEIGHBORING STATES AND PROVINCES, NOTABLY ONTARIO, WHERE THE MINIMUM WAGE NOW STANDS AT DOLS 2.63 AND WILL INCREASE IN JANUARY TO DOLS 3.00.
MCNAMARA

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NNN

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Reason:
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